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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
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SIPDIS

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ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR M. GAVIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2019
TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC PHUM ZI
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S COURTESY CALL ON NICHOLAS GOCHE

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) As part of a series of courtesy calls on new Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) ministers, the Ambassador met on May 14 with Nicholas Goche, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development. Goche is a long-time ZANU-PF insider who served as that party's lead negotiator in negotiations between ZANU-PF and the MDC that resulted in the September 15 Global Political Agreement (GPA). He previously served for five years as Zimbabwe's ambassador to the U.S.

¶2. (C) Goche told the Ambassador that negotiations had been difficult and tense, but he was now happy with cooperation between the two parties. In his opinion, the government was largely harmonious. Goche acknowledged that the GPA had not found favor with the heads of the security forces and that there was residual opposition. But apart from the top of the security forces, most officers welcomed the stability that it had brought.

¶3. (C) When Goche brought up the issue of U.S. assistance, the Ambassador responded that we needed to see genuine reform and highlighted the continuing presence of Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor Gideon Gono and Attorney General Johannes Tomana as obstacles to reform. Goche said that Gono's situation had changed -- he implied his wings had been clipped -- and said he should no longer be of concern to us. He argued that Tomana in dealing with detainees had been abiding by the law, but he admitted Tomana had been politically insensitive. Goche gave no indication that the removal of either Gono or Tomana was under consideration.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador also brought up the issue of farm invasions/disruptions. Goche replied that the State has the legal right to reallocate land, and that most recent incidents involved individuals exercising their rights under government-authorized offer letters. There had been some cases of illegal activity and the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) was considering these.

COMMENT

15. (C) Goche is a ZANU-PF apparatchik and he predictably spouted the party line. The meeting was useful, however, as a means to send a message to Mugabe. Goche is close to Mugabe and had just come from a meeting with him. The Ambassador's comments that U.S. economic support will be impossible with the likes of Gono and Tomana occupying important offices will certainly be relayed. END COMMENT.

MCGEE